



## Westmoreland County Community College

# ATD *Info Brief*

December 2013

### **Achieving the Dream**

This issue of the ATD InfoBrief focuses on WCCC's recent initiatives to support its part-time faculty members. In a June 2013 article for [insidehighered.com](http://insidehighered.com) titled "Who Will Lead Community Colleges?" Paul Fain describes the challenges facing new community college presidents. His list includes (in addition to improving graduation and retention rates, reforming remedial education and addressing technological innovation) engaging with part-time faculty members. WCCC has undertaken three new projects this year to address this challenge:

1. An update to the student opinion survey process
2. Increased programing aimed at part-time faculty professional development
3. A new procedure for administrative evaluation of part-time faculty.

Since more than 50% of course sections are taught by adjunct faculty members, it is critical to student success that these instructors receive timely and meaningful feedback on their teaching. To that end, the student opinion survey process has been taken over by Institutional Research and largely automated. This will allow the college to return student evaluations to part-time instructors months quicker than was the case previously. With respect to professional development, the Faculty Development Committee has increased its outreach to part-time teachers to include them in live development sessions. The committee has also made available a library of trainings on at-risk populations, campus safety and student success through [www.go2knowledge.org](http://www.go2knowledge.org). Part-time faculty are also invited to participate in the Teaching Skills Workshop series, for which they receive a small stipend as well as critiques and feedback on their pedagogical techniques.

### **Part-time Faculty Evaluation Procedures**

By far, the biggest of the projects involving part-time instructors has been the elaboration of a new process for administrative evaluation. The guidelines were drafted by a committee of deans and the vice president for Academic Affairs, approved by full-time faculty leadership and implemented by Human Resources for the 2013 fall semester. Just as important as the details of the procedure are the expectations set by the process for quality instruction. A lot of attention is paid in the evaluation and critique process to the structure of the course, the accuracy of the syllabus, the quality and quantity of assessment of student learning, and the type feedback given to students by their instructors. Beyond expectations for course management though, the college places a high value on organization and preparation for class sessions, the learning environment created by teachers in the classroom, subject matter competence and appropriate instructional methodology.

Because it is new, the guidelines for the procedure are included verbatim on the following side.

#### **PURPOSE**

Part-time faculty evaluation is intended to promote teaching effectiveness, classroom management and student success.

## PROCEDURE

Formal evaluation procedures shall consist of a *Student Perception of Performance* and a completed *Part-Time Faculty Classroom Observation and Evaluation Form*.

### 1. Student Perception of Performance

- a. A standard questionnaire shall be administered to students at least once each fall and spring semester. The college may elect to administer this performance evaluation form during the summer semesters.
- b. Completed questionnaires shall be returned to and retained by the appropriate dean until completion of the courses, at which time they shall be forwarded to the faculty member, with a copy of the summary forwarded to the director of Human Resources.

### 2. Part-Time Faculty Classroom Observation and Evaluation Form

- a. Evaluations shall include at least one (1) class observation.
- b. Class observation may take place at any time without notice.
- c. The evaluator will provide a written report of the class observation to the faculty member within 10 working days after the semester final grades are due in Records Office
- d. New part-time faculty shall have at least one class observation in the second half of their first semester.

### 3. Post-Evaluation Conference

- a. Following completion of the evaluation procedure, a discussion will be held with the part-time faculty member.
- b. The evaluator will discuss and put in writing both strengths and areas for improvement of teaching effectiveness and classroom management.
- c. The faculty member shall have the ability to verbally and in writing comment as part of the evaluation process.
- d. The *Part-Time Faculty Classroom Observation and Evaluation Form* shall be made part of the faculty member's personnel file in Human Resources and a copy will be provided to the faculty member.

### 4. Frequency of Formal Evaluation

- a. New part-time faculty shall have at least one class observation in the second half of their first semester. Should faculty members have a break in teaching assignment more than 3 academic semesters they will automatically be considered as New Part-Time Faculty.
- b. New Faculty may have a class observation *Part-Time Faculty Classroom Observation and Evaluation Form* conducted in the next semester as deemed necessary by administrator.
- c. All part-time faculty, without break in teaching assignments for more than 3 academic semesters, may have a class observation at least every five (5) years
- d. The dean may conduct at any time a class observation and *Part-Time Faculty Classroom Observation and Evaluation* without notice.
- e. A class observation and *Part-Time Faculty Classroom Observation and Evaluation* or any part thereof, may be requested at any time by the individual part time faculty member.



John D. Wicinas (pictured in the "Brown" sweatshirt), 2013 WCCC Outstanding Part-Time Teaching Award recipient, arranged a private tour of the Robert Taylor Plantation for his history students this fall.